

Hello everyone,

I will give you warning that Donna Robinson told me I should write a 30-minute speech. Don't worry, I did not follow that little bit of advice.

I want to tell you what it is like standing up here and as you all know I am long winded, so, the shortest explanation I can come up with is "WOW!" I have looked up to so many nannies that I know through INA and NAN including Harriette Grant, Glenda Propst, Tonya Grell Sakowicz, Myrna Alphonse, Donna Saunders, Dr. Eva Harkness, and so many others. I have listened to what they have had to share and asked questions and researched to learn even more because I always want to be one of the best and these nannies kept raising the bar.

For a number of years now people have been trying to nominate me for Nanny of the Year and I kept saying no because I didn't feel qualified to represent the people I look up to, but slowly, things started to change. I became a nanny mentor, became more involved in local and online support groups, and realized that people I knew and respected were starting to come to me with some questions.

I started a new job in January of last year and about a month into the job I was discussing donations for the INA conference with my employer and the subject of a gift for the Nanny of the Year came up. My new employer said I should be Nanny of the year and what did we need to do? To which I responded, "You need to know me for more than a month before nominating me." When my employers negotiated my 2nd year contract in January of this year my nomination was signed at the bottom of the pile of papers. Looking at those signed papers I knew one thing, it was time to push myself out of my comfort zone and to step up and own what I have learned and who I have become. I contacted a few friends for help and letters and quietly went to work on my nomination portfolio. A few weeks later I contacted my nanny school, Northwest Nannies Institute, to tell the owners that I was being nominated and the immediate response was, "Can we nominate you too?" So I say, "Yes." Within days another nomination arrived via fax and I incorporated it into my nomination portfolio and put everything in the mail. Much to my surprise I was later contacted by two other friends who each asked if they could nominate me and I told them my paperwork was already mailed. I had reached the point where you sit and wait and see what happens. Then, I received a small envelope in the mail.

You see, I had sent off the draft of my nomination portfolio to a couple of people who I thought would like to see it. I thought I might get a call but when that didn't happen I quickly forgot about sending it and went on with life. Then this little envelope arrived and I want you to share it with you:

Dear MaryAnn,

Could a set of parents be more proud of a daughter than we are of you? Back in 1989 when you announced that you wished to take care of children and glorify God in your work, you defined your goal in life and left for Northwest Nannies Institute.

To read the letters from parents of the children you have cared for over the years is to read the work history of someone who makes Mary Poppins pale in comparison! You have left your mark on all the families you have cared for and have contributed so much to their communities through your volunteer work. Could we be more in awe of your accomplishments? The answer is obvious.

Love from two very proud parents,

Mom & Dad

This note reminds me of what is important to the children in our care, and demonstrates that life always comes down to the simplest of things. “My adults are proud of me!”

OK, we have reached that part of any speech where people start glazing over like hot donuts, so everyone stand up. Now, I am going to ask you a list of questions and if you say yes stay standing.

Are you a nanny?

Do you attend conferences and classes?

Are you a member of INA?

Do you have 5 years of nanny experience?

Are you involved in local or online nanny support groups?

Have you worked with various ages of children and different types of families?

Do you employers, friends, and agency believe that you are a great nanny?

Do you talk with other nannies about your experience and listen and learn from them?

Do nannies and parents come to you asking questions about what you know?

When someone asks a nanny related question do you answer or offer to research it?

Do you believe in yourself and what you do?

Are you interested in being more involved with INA?

Would you like to be nominated to be the 20th Nanny of the Year in 2010?

I want everyone to look around at all the amazing people in this room. Do you see people standing, or sitting and looking nervous, that you believe deserve to be nominated as the 2010 Nanny of the year? This is my challenge to you, if you believe you know someone who should be Nanny of the Year then offer to NOMINATE them!

I stand here now, honored that my employers, my nanny school instructors, my peers, my mentors, and my parents have expressed their belief and respect in my knowledge, abilities, and professionalism.

Thank you all for allowing me to represent the amazing people in this room as the International Nanny Association 2009 Nanny of the Year.